Types of Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institutions are classified according to whether they organise university or non-university provision.

Those providing non-university education are further subdivided into centres which offer advanced vocational training cycles [1] and specialised education [2] institutions.

University education

University education is provided by universities, which may be public or private.

Public universities are created and private universities are recognised through:

- an Act passed by the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Community where the institution will be located, or
- an Act approved by the Spanish Parliament, at the proposal of the Government, in accordance with the Government Council of the relevant Autonomous Community.

A prior report from the General Assembly for University Policy is required in this process. To prepare this report, which will issue a favourable or unfavourable statement towards the creation or recognition of universities, compliance with the following basic requirements is taken into account:

- official degrees offered: at least a total of eight official Bachelor and Master’s degrees. This provision must be coherent within each branch of knowledge and as a whole. In order to prove that they meet this requirement, universities must submit a development plan of the degrees they offer for each branch of knowledge
- an appropriate research plan: to prove this requirement, universities must submit a multi annual programme of their research activity in the scientific areas that are related to the official degrees they are to provide
- a sufficient number of suitably qualified teaching and research staff:

  1. the total number of members of the teaching and research staff (on a full-time basis or the equivalent on a part-time basis) cannot be less than the one that results from applying 1/25 in relation to the total number of students enrolled in official university studies. The ratio can range from 1/50 to 1/100 in the case of distance education
  2. the teaching and research staff must be composed of at least:

      - a 50% of Doctors in the case of studies leading to the award of a Bachelor degree
      - a 70% of Doctors in the case of studies leading to the award of a Master’s degree
      - a 100% of Doctors in the case of studies leading to the award of a PhD
      - at least 60% of the total number of teachers must perform their duties on a full-time basis.
• adequate facilities, means and resources for the performance of their functions: teaching and research spaces, Resource Centre for Learning and Research (CRAI) and computer equipment
• an adequate organisation and structure: this must be reflected in the Statutes (in the case of public universities) or in the Organisational and Operational Rules (in private universities)
• ensure the provision of the service, as well as the continuation of their activities
• ensure that the Statutes, legal regime and Organisational and Operational Rules comply with both the law and the legal order.

The initiation of the activities of universities must be authorised by the relevant body of the Autonomous Community, after verification of compliance with the requirements for their creation or recognition. In addition, universities must apply for the institutional accreditation of their centres from the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) or, where appropriate, the body for external evaluation of the Autonomous Community.

Public universities

They are integrated by University Schools, Faculties, Departments, University Institutes for Research, Doctoral Colleges and by other schools or structures necessary for the development of their functions.

• University Schools and Faculties

They are the institutions responsible for the organisation of their studies and in charge of the academic, administrative and management processes that lead to the conferment of the different university degrees.

Their creation, modification and withdrawal, as well as the implementation and withdrawal of studies leading to the award of an official university degree and which is valid nationwide is agreed by the Autonomous Community to which the university belongs either through the Autonomous Community's initiative with the agreement of the Government Council of the university, or through the university's own initiative through a proposal of the Government Council. In both cases a previous favourable report by the Social Council is required.

• Departments

They are teaching and research units in charge of:

• coordinating studies of one or more fields of knowledge in one or more university centres according to the teaching programme of the university
• supporting teaching and research activities and initiatives of the teaching staff
• performing all other duties determined by their statutes.

The establishment, modification and withdrawal of departments correspond to the university, according to their statutes.

• University research institutes

Their activity focuses mainly on technical and scientific research and on artistic creation. These centres are also entitled to offer and implement PhD studies and programmes and postgraduate studies.

They can be created by one or more universities, or jointly with other public or private organisations
by means of collaboration agreements or other means of cooperation.

Furthermore, universities can create joint research institutes, in cooperation with other public research bodies, with the National Health Service and with public or private non-profit research centres.

- **Integrated higher education areas**

  Their creation is promoted by universities and public authorities.

  They develop new channels of collaboration between the production sector, universities, vocational training institutions and other dependent bodies, so as to encourage business and scientific innovation.

  They constitute the university campus which incorporates vocational training centres offering higher vocational training, whose professional families are related to the areas of specialisation of the campus.

- **Doctoral colleges**

  Their main objective is to organise PhD programmes into one or more interdisciplinary knowledge branches. They may also include official science-oriented Master programmes, as well as many other types of training activities in the area of research.

  These colleges may be created by one or more universities, with the possible participation of other bodies, centres, institutions or national and international entities which carry out R&D&I activities.

- **Public or private associated centres**

  They provide official studies.

  The association is established by means of an agreement that has to be approved by the Autonomous Community: if the association is to a public university, it is done at the proposal of the Governing Council of the university, subject to a favourable report from its Social Council; if the association is to a private university, it is done at the proposal of the university.

  They must be established within the territorial scope of the relevant Autonomous Community or count with the approval of the Autonomous Community where they are located. They must comply with the rules of the State and the Autonomous Communities, the joining agreement and their own organisational and operational rules.

**Private universities and university institutions**

They can be created by any individual or legal entity, provided that they respect the constitutional principles and abide by the State regulations and those of the Autonomous Communities. University private centres must be integrated into a private university as centres belonging to such university or they must be ascribed to a public or private university.

Private universities elaborate and approve their own organisation and functioning regulations, which must respect and guarantee, through a broad participation of the university community, the academic freedom manifested in the academic, research and study freedom.

In order to guarantee the quality of universities and university centres, a series of requirements are established, which both existing universities and newly created ones must comply with. Besides, the
Autonomous Communities establish their own specific requirements within their territory. More information on Organisation of private education [3].

Both public and private universities, together with university institutions, must be registered in the Register of Universities, Centres and Qualifications [4] of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.

For the academic year 2018-19, data from the Register and the statistics of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training show that the Spanish university system comprises 84 universities:

- 50 public universities: 47 offering on-site teaching and 1 distance teaching. In addition, there are 2 public universities with a special status that only provide specialised postgraduate programmes (Master's and PhD)
- 34 private universities: 29 on-site teaching, 1 with no teaching activity, and 5 distance teaching.

**Advanced Artistic Education**

The type of studies pursued determines the centres in which they are taught:

- music and dance higher studies are carried out in conservatories or higher schools of music and dance
- drama studies, in performing arts higher schools
- conservation and restoration of cultural heritage studies, in higher schools of conservation and restoration of cultural heritage
- art studies in the corresponding specialised higher education institutions
- design higher studies in design higher schools.

Each Autonomous Community may agree with the universities in its territorial area formulas of collaboration for this type of studies.

In turn, the educational administrations may associate, by means of an agreement, centres of Advanced Artistic Education to universities and establish procedures to favour autonomy and facilitate the organisation and management of conservatories and higher schools. They must also promote agreements with universities for the organisation of doctoral studies.

Advanced Artistic Education institutions should also promote research programmes in their own disciplines.

**Non university Education**

**Advanced vocational training**

Higher level vocational training can be studied in:

- secondary education schools, which also provide compulsory secondary education and Bachillerato
- national reference centres
- integrated vocational training centres.
The total number of centres that impart on-site Advanced vocational training amounts to 2,388, of which 1,643 are public, 305 publicly-funded private and 440 private. As for distance Advanced vocational training, it is imparted by 287 centres, of which 181 are public and 106 private. More information on Number of Advanced vocational training centres according to ownership and percentage by Autonomous Community. [5]

More information on Organisation of the Education System and its Structure [6].

Regardless of public or private ownership, these institutions must comply with a series of minimum requirements.

- those related to the spaces established in each degree regulation
- those related to the equipment set up by educational administrations to achieve the learning outcomes of each vocational module [7].

More information on Organisation of private education [3].

**Plastic Arts and Design Advanced Vocational Education**

These studies can be pursued in:

- public schools: integrated vocational schools, art schools, art and design colleges and secondary education institutes
- private institutions (both associated or not): specific vocational training, secondary education, plastic arts and design and various specialised establishments.

**Advanced Vocational Education in Sports**

These studies can be pursued in:

- public schools: sports schools, integrated vocational schools, secondary schools and vocational schools
- private institutions (both associated or not): sports schools, specific vocational training, integrated vocational training and various specialised establishments.

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